

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for preventing contamination on the surfaces of optical elements with a multilayer system during their exposure to EUV radiation at signal wavelength in an evacuated closed system having a residual gas atmosphere, comprising the steps of: measuring a photocurrent generated by photoemission from the radiated surface of the multilayer system, and using the photocurrent to control the gas composition of the residual gas, wherein the gas composition of the residual gas is altered as a function of at least one lower and one upper threshold value of the photocurrent.

2. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the threshold values of the photocurrent are selected from the range between a minimum photocurrent I_{\min} and a maximum photocurrent I_{\max} , which occur when a minimum and a maximum of the electric field intensity of the standing wave, which forms in the multilayer system when the incident signal wavelength is reflected, lie in the free interface of the multilayer system.

3. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising the following steps:

a) measuring a first value of the photocurrent at the start of the EUV radiation after the subsidence of transient effects and storing this value as a first threshold value S_1 ,

b) defining at least one second threshold value $S_{2,i}$ for the photocurrent, where $i = 1, 2, 3, \dots$, such that $S_1 > S_{2,i}$ or $S_1 < S_{2,i}$,

c) measuring the photocurrent during the ongoing EUV radiation, and

d) controlling the gas composition during the radiation as a function of the measured photocurrent by supplying at least one gas to the closed system before or when the second threshold value $S_{2,i}$ is reached or exceeded and subsequently at least reducing the supply of this gas before or when the first threshold value S_1 is reached or exceeded.

4. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising the following steps:

a) measuring a first value of the photocurrent at the start of the EUV radiation after the subsidence of transient effects and storing this value as a first threshold value S_1 ,

b) defining at least one second threshold value $S_{2,i}$ for the photocurrent, where $i = 1, 2, 3, \dots$, such that $S_1 > S_{2,i}$ or $S_1 < S_{2,i}$,

c) measuring the photocurrent during the ongoing EUV radiation, and

d) controlling the gas composition during the radiation as a function of the measured photocurrent by supplying at least one gas to the closed system before or when the first threshold value S_1 is reached or exceeded and subsequently at least reducing the supply of this gas before or when the second threshold value $S_{2,1}$ is reached or exceeded.

5. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein a gas is supplied which is already contained in the residual gas atmosphere, such that the partial pressure of this gas is changed.

6. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in 1, wherein a gas is supplied which is not contained in the residual gas atmosphere before said supply.

7. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, hydrogen, water, oxygen, nitrogen, SF_6 , He, Ne, Ar, Kr, Xe, alkanes, alkenes, alkynes, alcohols, ketones, aldehydes and/or other hydrocarbons, formic acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, hydrogen peroxide, hydrazine, N_2O , NO, NO_2 , SO_2 and/or other oxygen-containing gases, F, Cl, Br, I, chloromethane, dichloromethane, trichloromethane, carbon tetrachloride, carbon tetrafluoride, fluoromethane, difluoromethane, ammonia, phosphine, antimony hydride, hydrogen fluoride, hydrogen chloride, hydrogen bromide, hydrogen iodide, boron fluoride, diborane, nitrogen trifluoride, hydrogen sulfide, hydrogen selenide, hydrogen telluride and other halogen/hydrogen-containing gases is/are supplied.

8. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein a plurality of second threshold values $S_{2,i}$ are defined, where $|S_{2,i+1}-S_1| \leq |S_{2,i}-S_1|$ or $|S_{2,i+1}-S_{2,i}| \leq |S_{2,i}-S_{2,i-1}|$ where $i = 1, 2, 3, \dots$

9. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein before the EUV radiation, the position of the closest minimum and/or reversal point and/or the maximum (curve position) of the electric field intensity of the standing wave forming in the multilayer system when the incident signal wavelength is reflected is determined relative to the free interface of the multilayer system and the second threshold value $S_{2,i}$ is defined as a lower or an upper threshold value as a function of the curve position relative to the first threshold value S_1 .

10. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein in an optical element with a surface susceptible to oxidation, a carbonizing gas composition is adjusted prior to EUV radiation.

11. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 10, wherein a carbon-containing gas is supplied before the first threshold value S_1 is reached.

12. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the measured photoelectrons are converted into the time integral of the corresponding current.

13. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the gas is delivered in the proximity of the surface of the optical element.

14. (Previously Presented) A device for controlling contamination on a surface of at least one optical element during the exposure to EUV radiation, comprising: a detection unit for photoelectrons emitted by the optical element, an evaluation unit connected to the detection unit and a control unit connected to the evaluation unit and to a gas delivery unit, wherein the evaluation unit is configured to

compare the measured photocurrent with at least two stored threshold values of the photocurrent and to supply threshold-dependent signals to the control unit.

15. (Currently Amended) An EUV lithographic device, comprising: ~~[[with]]~~ optical elements, wherein a detection unit for photoelectrons is mounted in the proximity of at least one of the optical elements and is operatively linked to an evaluation unit, wherein a control unit is connected to the evaluation unit and is operatively linked to at least one gas delivery unit, wherein the evaluation unit is configured to compare a measured photocurrent with at least two stored threshold values of the photocurrent and to supply threshold-dependent signals to the control unit.

16. (Previously Presented) The device as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the detection unit comprises an electron collector, comprising a detection ring or a detection network disposed above the surface of the optical element, which is arranged and/or configured in such a way that it does not affect the incident EUV radiation.

17. (Previously Presented) The device as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the gas delivery unit has at least one gas feed.

18. (Previously Presented) The device as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the gas feed is arranged adjacent to the surface of the optical element.

19. (Previously Presented) The device as claimed in Claim 14, wherein a residual gas analyzer is connected to the evaluation unit.

20. (Previously Presented) The device as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the evaluation unit and the control unit are combined into a closed-loop control unit.

21. (Previously Presented) A method for cleaning carbon-contaminated surfaces of optical elements by exposure to EUV radiation in an oxygen-containing atmosphere, comprising the steps of: measuring the photocurrent generated during radiation by photoemission from the surface to be cleaned and, if at least two

predefined threshold values of the photocurrent are exceeded or fallen short of,
supplying at least one gas or interrupting the supply of at least one gas